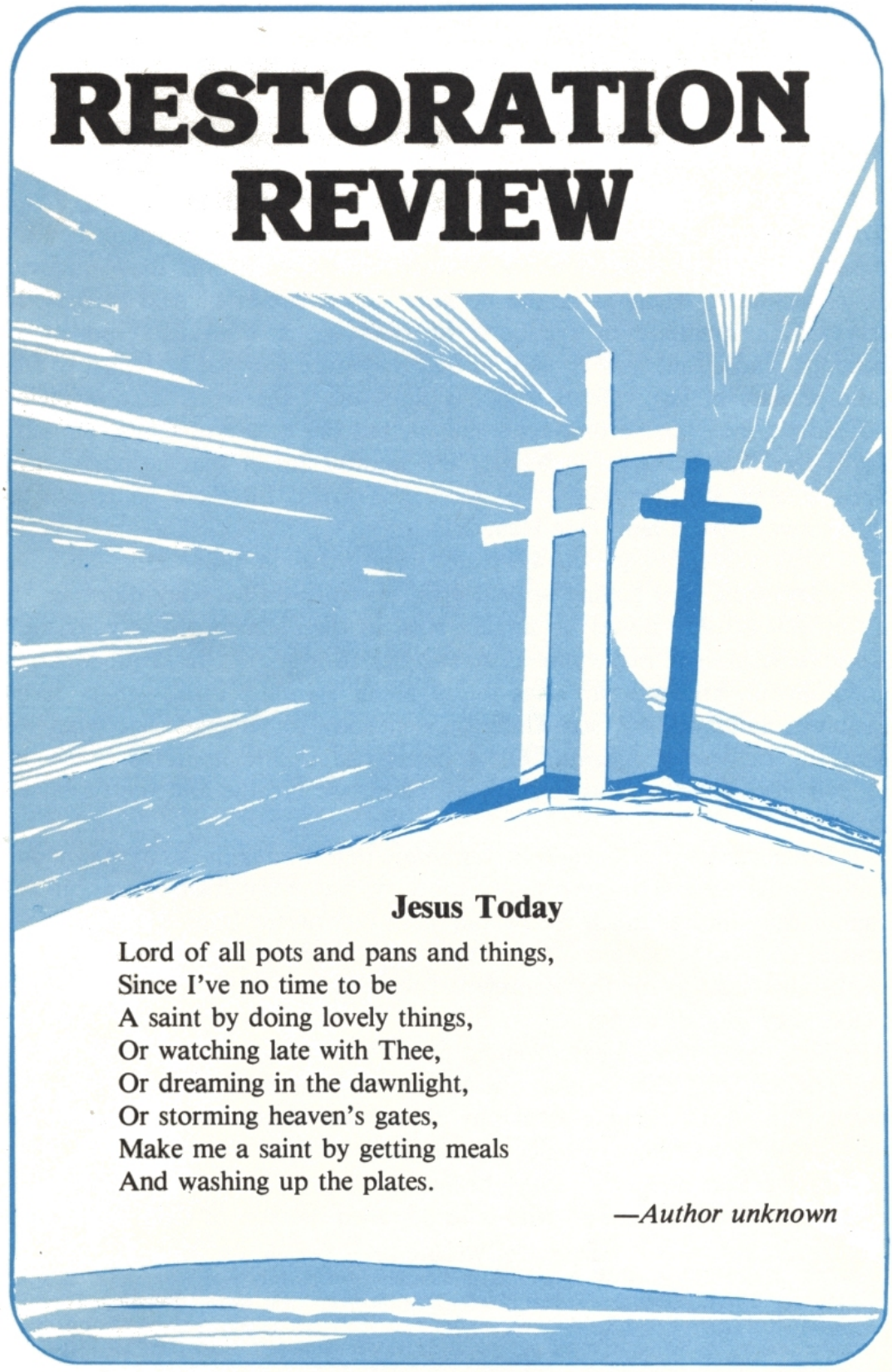
RESTORATION REVIEW



Jesus Today

Lord of all pots and pans and things,
Since I've no time to be
A saint by doing lovely things,
Or watching late with Thee,
Or dreaming in the dawnlight,
Or storming heaven's gates,
Make me a saint by getting meals
And washing up the plates.

—Author unknown

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Volume 23, No. 1 **Leroy Garrett, Editor** **January 1981**

Jesus Today …

THE JESUS THAT NEVER WAS

Jesus Christ is *the same yesterday and today, yes and forever.* Heb. 13:8

This is our text for the year as we examine our faith in terms of *Jesus Today,* a theme that is appropriate in a time when hardly anything besides money and things appears to be relevant. The text affirms that whatever Jesus was he is, whatever he did he does, and whatever he said he says. It serves as a summary of the book of *Hebrews*, a word fitly spoken to believers whose faith was in peril in that they were tempted to return to the false security of law. "Jesus Christ is the same," the writer assures them, not simply the doctrine that Jesus taught, but the *nature* of Christ himself. He is the same powerful, gracious, and faithful Savior that he has always been, and he will continue to be forever. There is therefore no reason to "drift away" from him. (See Heb. 2:1)

Jesus today! What does he really mean to us in 1981? Does he have any relevance to our getting up and going to work on Monday morning, to a sink full of dirty dishes, to unpaid bills, to the regimen of everyday life? Does faith in him make any difference as to who is President, what is going on in Afghanistan, what to do about spiraling inflation? Is Jesus mainly a Sunday thing, something or somebody for emergencies, what we generally classify as *religion?* Or is he as real as life itself, as timely as today's newspaper, and as relevant as the air we breathe and the water we drink?

Whatever he may have been *yesterday,* unless he is the same *today* our faith means little. However much those of *yesterday* trusted him, if we cannot trust him as much *today,* our faith still means little. This Scripture assures us that he is "the same," that he is changeless and immutable. It was a good reason for the Hebrew believers to be steadfast. If he was not fickle, they should not be.

But, really now, what meaning does "the Story" have in our life in the 1980's? John tells us that the Word that was God became flesh and dwelt (for awhile) among humanity. Mark introduces his version of the Story with a startling sentence: "The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God." Luke begins the Story with a baby born of a virgin, the "holy offspring" who is to be called the Son of God. Matthew's record counts off 42 generations of sinful humanity, which includes prostitutes and murderers, and concludes with: "from the deportation to Babylon to the time of Christ fourteen generations." Then he writes: *the birth of Jesus Christ was as follows …* When Paul came

along a decade or so after the Story had been sealed, like a child untimely born, he could say, "I saw him saying to me" (Acts 22: 18). "I *saw* him *saying"* vibrates with reality.

History, history, history! In this context it is what God did *yesterday.* Generations pass in an unfolding drama, a peasant virgin gives birth to a baby, the eternal Logos becomes a human being, men see and hear and touch the Son of God, who tabernacles among them. The stage is set for mankind's grossest sin, the murder of the Holy One. But the grave cannot hold him. So the Good News of all history is that man, through the one that Paul *saw* and *heard,* has victory over both sin and the grave. It was yesterday, history, but it is also today. It is just as real, just as meaningful, now as then.

A gifted actor presents a dramatic monologue these days on the life of Jesus, which consists simply of a reading of *Mark.* President and Mrs. Carter stated that they were moved by the presentation when they heard it in Washington. *Mark* was a wise choice, for it moves "straightway" through the Story, eager to show how Jesus was gloriously accepted by the Father while cruelly rejected by men. Mark did not bother with much of what Jesus taught. There is no Sermon on the Mount and few parables. His main concern was to show what Jesus was, and how he was recognized as the Son of God by men, angels, and even devils as well as the Father. Throughout *Mark,* there is "the Messianic secret." While Jesus accepted his disciples' acknowledgment that he was Messiah, he warned them not to reveal it. He rather used the humbler title of Son of Man.

It is a great Story that Mark tells. I would like to hear that gifted performer read those lines where Mark first introduces Jesus in history: "It came about in those days that Jesus came from Nazareth in Galilee, and was baptized by John in the Jordan. And straightway coming up out of the water, he saw the heavens opening, and the Spirit like a dove descending upon him; and a voice came out of the heavens: 'Thou art My beloved Son, in Thee I am well-pleased.' And straightway the Spirit impelled him to go out into the wilderness."

These are what Alexander Campbell (and John Locke before him) pointed to as *facts* of the Bible. Facts make up the Story, and for that reason we can all agree on what the facts are and what they say. It is the deductions drawn from the facts that we disagree on. Let the deductions be treated as opinions, Campbell insisted, and let us unite upon the facts. It is a great heritage we have, both the facts of the gospel and the Campbell-Stone plea that the church can unite upon those facts.

As we probe our theme of *Jesus Today,* drawn from what Jesus was yesterday, it may *not* be amiss to observe first what Jesus never was. The church as well as the world has created all sorts of fabrications of Jesus. The myths of what Jesus was and is comprise no small assembly, and if the man of Galilee should respond to *Will the real Jesus please*

stand up?, the church might be as surprised as the world at that one solitary figure that rises to his feet, if indeed he be in the assembly at all. Have we laid hold of the Bible and yet missed Jesus? Have we built magnificent edifices to accommodate him only to find him elsewhere? Are we busy about many things, even good things, and yet neglect what is most important? To be sure, nothing is as important as Jesus. But Jesus who?

Malachi Martin, a wily Jesuit priest who is a professor at the Pontifical Institute in Rome, has done extensive research on what has happened to Jesus in the machinations of man. In his studies at Oxford and Hebrew universities he concentrated on sources about Jesus in Jewish and Islamic sources. This has resulted in a book on *Jesus Now,* which traces the muddle of interpretations about Jesus. It is an amazing catalogue of confusion, to say the least, and one is left to wonder how the lowly Nazarene could be crucified over and over again by those who profess to honor him.

There is, for instance, Jesus Doctor. While the real Jesus taught with peace, dignity, and authority, and with healing and unifying effect, the doctors of religion became doctors of doctrine rather than curers of the heart, dispensers of words rather than ministers of the Word. The doctors have forgotten holiness while laying down tests for the true Christian and they assume episcopal dignity without pasturing the sheep. The Jesus Doctors preside over the creeds that exclude all but their own kind, and they speak words presumed to be infallible. The Jesuit scholar, who is as critical of the Roman church as any, charges the Jesus Doctors with trying to entomb Jesus in words and losing him in concepts.

Then there is Jesus Monk who enters a monastery where he chants, meditates, and prays until he dies full of years and full of merit. Not only is pleasure renounced but thought as well, for body and mind alike are turned over to superiors. He or she is only to obey. Mental joy and self-confidence are beaten out of many trusting young women by appealing to the authority of the chief Bride of Jesus Monk, Martin charges, but he sees Jesus Monk on the decline in recent years because so many are learning that the real Jesus wants the ministry of men and women *in the Spirit.*

The real Jesus is in the black man’s soul according to Jesus Black. The black Jesus may not save but he revolutionizes. He was not born of a virgin as much as of black life and black faith. They killed Jesus Black when they killed Martin Luther King and Malcolm X. Blackness provides a new gospel, not of the cross but of the clenched fist. Jesus Black is a racist, calling for blacks to rally to their blackness, just as Jesus Femina is a sexist urging women to assert their sexuality and thus be liberated from male domination. But Dr. Martin sees an amazing contradiction in Jesus Femina, for while her theology is sexist she asserts the equality of men and women. Jesus Femina calls for she-popes, she-bishops, she-confessors, and he-nuns and he-wives. But Martin finds the real Jesus to be a real man’

born of a real woman who in turn was married to a real man, Joseph, the most inscrutable character in history, who did not stand alone but with his wife and her son.

There is even Jesus Gay, for after all was there not a love affair between Jesus and the unmarried John "who lay on Jesus' breast"? There is now the Gay Church of the Beloved Disciple, founded in 1970. Jesus Gay says, "Stop being a good queer. Be yourself." Gays have nothing to fear from God, says Jesus Gay. Gays marry one another, blessed by Jesus Gay, and even tombs are reserved for homosexuals. Jesus Gay is kin to Jesus Christ Super Star, who is a kind of Broadway Joe, who sits atop a huge wooden phallus in center stage. While not as big as Mickey Mouse in Disneyland, he is as homey as Peanuts and as regular as Archie Bunker. You feel you have known the guy all your life. Y'Know? In the Jesus Freak clubhouse the stuffing has been knocked out of reverence. You see groovy Mary Magdalene telling Jesus what is good for him, and the jokes about the Rich Young Ruler and the crack about losing your life to save it, along with the eye-batting music, tells you what religion really is.

There is hardly an end to the Jesuses. There is Jesus Protestant, with all sorts of aberrations, such as Jesus Pentecostal, Jesus Jehovah's Witnesses, Jesus Mormon, each with its own myth about the real Jesus. There is Jesus Jew, Jesus Muslim, and Jesus Caesar, each with its own slant. Then comes Jesus Goodfellow and Jesus One-of-the-Boys. Even Jesus Jesusite, who give us Jesus night clubs, Jesus love-ins, Jesus kissin', Jesus rockin'. Give me a J, give me an E! If you are fed up with your elders, tired of shaving and bathing, this is for you. Get to a commune!

The Jesus that never was has long eclipsed the Jesus of yesterday and today, the Jesus of history, the Jesus of Matthew, Mark, Luke, John, and Paul. If there is a Jesus Pentecost and a Jesus Mormon, we must take heed lest we create a Jesus Restoration or a Jesus Church of Christ, who can only take their places in that ignoble assembly of the Jesus that never was. We err as do others if we see Jesus as the head and founder of what we call The Church of Christ or as the cornerstone of a parochial interpretation of Scripture. If there is a Jesus Gay and a Jesus Black, there might also be Jesus Sectarian, who presides over our petty parties. We can even create a Jesus Doctrine or a Jesus Baptism or a Jesus Church.

If we do not really want *him* and his Spirt dwelling in us, he will get lost on his own. The real Jesus does not impose himself. We find him only by seeking him. The substitutes, such as the "right church" or some system of doctrine, are always attractive to the one who has not yet resolved to search for him as for a buried treasure.

Jesus Christ is the same, yesterday, today, and, yes, forever! The ball is in our court. -- *the Editor*

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ETERNAL LIFE AND FELLOWSHIP

This is eternal life, that they may know Thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent. - In. 17:3

The thesis of this short essay is that our fellowship with each other is predicated upon fellowship with the Father. If we *know* the Father we will be sisters and brothers to each other. Fellowship is first with God, then with one another. If we are not at peace with God, there is no way for us to be at peace with each other. It is therefore a matter of being *right* with God, which is what justification means, and not necessarily "right" by someone's doctrinal standard. This essay also affirms that this fellowship with God is the meaning of eternal life. We are saying, then, that when we share this *life* together we are in the fellowship together, which means that fellowship is the sharing of eternal life. When we see this great truth we will no longer try to base fellowship upon "issues," which only serves to proliferate sectarianism.

When we are believers we are caught up in a glorious mystery, that of being creatures of time and yet partakers of eternity. The meaning of *time* is itself a weighty question, one that baffles the wisest philosophers. We measure time by clocks and calendars, but what is it that is measured? The best answer I have found is that time is what one experiences. When an hour passes it is not the 60 minutes that is time, but what you have experienced. And yet our experiences sometime defy the clock, for when we are having a glorious experience, such as enjoying the presence of loved ones, "time" seems to stand still, and we find ourselves saying, "I can't believe that three hours have passed." But the *time* was not the three hours, for sand in a vial could have measured it just as well, but what happened to you.

This may help us to understand the meaning of *eternity,* which has no bearing upon "time" - that is, days, months and years - but upon experience and relationships. Eternity is quality of life rather than quantity. That the Father is eternal means far more than that He is everlasting. It means that He is spiritual and holy. So it is with us. We enter eternity when we are transformed into a new kind of life, and according to Scripture eternal life is ours *now* another "time" word which means that it can be a present experience as well as a future one or that it transcends what we call time.

The apostle John assures us that he wrote the Story so that we might believe that Jesus is the Son of God and "that believing you may have life in His name" (Jn. 20:31). He makes it clear that the life promised the believer is a present reality: "He who has the Son has the life, he who does not have the Son of God does not have the life" (I Jn. 5: 12).

Notice the emphatic "*the* life," which is the only real life there is, eternal life. He calls it that in Jn. 17:3: "This is eternal life" not this *will be*, but *This is* eternal life, that they know Thee, the only true God and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent." It is clear that this new quality of life begins here and now. Eternal life may take on a more glorious reality beyond the grave but there is no question but what the apostle saw it as a present reality.

And he is specific as to what eternal life is. It is knowing God and Jesus Christ. *Knowing* suggests intimacy, such as that experienced by Enoch who "walked with God." It is fellowship with God, such as that enjoyed by Isaiah when he saw the glory of God in the temple. It is the relationship Paul describes in Gal. 2:20: "I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me." The force of the Greek verb would indicate that eternal life is the experience of *getting to know God* - - a continuing, lifetime, everlasting experience.

While Jesus in this passage points to the Father as the only true God, the apostle John understands that Jesus is also God and that he reveals to us the nature of the Father, as in I Jn. 5:20: "We know that the Son of God has come, and has given us understanding, in order that we might know Him who is true, and we are in Him who is true, in His Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God and eternal life. This is a good example of how Scripture interprets Scripture. I Jn. 5:20 enlarges upon John 17:3. John is saying that we know God only through Jesus, and we are *in* the Father (a living fellowship) by being *in* the Son, and this is eternal life.

Experience of God's presence and grace come in everyday events more than on a Damascus road. True, we may have an occasional Damascus, or a Mt. Everest, to change the metaphor, but "getting to know God" and cultivating an intimate walk with Him comes through meditating upon what He has revealed in Scripture, praying in the Spirit, and worshipping (serving) him in scores of ways everyday. What God wants us to know about Him is what He has revealed, so the Bible is always foremost in this experience. And this is more than knowing *about* Him; it is knowing Him. We come to know Him by knowing Jesus, who promises to move inside our *hearts* and dwell with us through his Spirit.

The same apostle refers to Christ as the Word of Life, which refers not to Scripture but to a Person. He says this life was made manifest in the gospel - "what we have seen and heard we proclaim to you" (1 Jn. 1:1-3). Then he says "that you also may have fellowship with us; and indeed our fellowship is with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ." This shows the relationship between fellowship and eternal life. Christian fellowship is simply an expression of the fellowship we have with God and Christ, which is our life, *eternal* life.

Fellowship is sharing God together, knowing God together, loving God together, growing in God together, all in reference to the Christ, who comes to us in God's image. All those who believe in Jesus and are baptized are in the fellowship. We all walk together when we walk with God. It is just that simple, and perhaps just that profound. The joy is not that we have the right church or even that we have found each other, but that we have found Him, and that *together* we can walk with Him.

The joy may be likened to what the great composer Mozart said he experienced in creating a symphony. He did not in his imagination "hear" the notes separately but the composition as a whole. It moved through his mind into a crescendo, thrilling his soul. Only later would he go through the ordeal of pointing up the notes, one by one. A Mozart composition is great in its wholeness, not so much the laborious parts that created it.

Fellowship with the Father and with the Son and with each other is like that. The joy of fellowship is eternal life as a whole, its relationships. It is not so much each prayer, each hymn, each Bible study, each labor of love, but the experience of knowing God. This is why fellowship can never be determined by a check-list of issues agreed upon. It is life, not an examination. Some prayers may seem off-track and sometimes Bible study never seems to jell, but the whole experience of loving God is of great joy.

So it is in our sharing the common life. We do not always get along perfectly, and we are now and again put out with each other. But still we are sisters and brothers, even when we disagree, and it is the symphony as a whole that counts, not an occasional stray note. Furthermore, to refer to Mozart again, who said that amidst a symphony he was lost to all time, we transcend time in Christian fellowship, for time is irrelevant. We have a new life that is lost to all time. -- *the Editor*

> What is the union among Christians worth unless it be for the promotion of holiness and happiness among themselves, or for the conversion of the world.

He that stands up for his party seldom can stand before God with a good conscience.

-- Alexander Campbell, *Mill. Harb.*, 1932, p. 194f

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SEVERING THE UMBILICAL CORD

As an editor among Churches of Christ for almost three decades I have observed that there is one thing especially that interests our people, *the changing scene.* Especially in recent years, a time of incredible change for heirs of the Restoration Movement, folk want

to know what is going on. In this article I want to share with my readers one important aspect of the changing scene: a view of some of our people who have "severed the umbilical cord," as one of them put it, which means that they no longer consider themselves a Church of Christ. We are left to wonder. however, as we take a closer look, if this is really the case. It may be that they have moved to a position that places them closer to what the Church of Christ is really supposed to be, and they may contribute far more to the renewal that is taking place than they realize. Maybe they haven't "left," after all, as they suppose, but are *arriving* at a more defensible position of what we should be, and may be leading us rather than forsaking us.

If our printer can successfully reproduce it, we will show you an ad that appeared in a Ft. Worth paper by MidCities Chapel in Arlington, Texas. The ad is significant in that it faithfully represents "the Plea" of our people throughout our history for nonsectarian Christianity, and while the ad implies that the chapel is not really "Church of Christ," its stance bears faithful witness to where we should be if we are not.

The Arlington group, you will note, refuses to wear any sectarian name. Some call them a "Church of Christ," the ad says, since they are *acappella*, but they do not accept this denominational appellation anymore than that of Presbyterian, Plymouth Brethren, or Baptist, with whom they also have things in common. So they are truer to the plea than the rest of us in that in practice as well as theory they are Christians only and refuse to be labeled anything else. They baptize only believers by immersion, they say, but this does not make them Baptist. They break bread weekly, but this does not make them Plymouth Brethren. They are governed by elders and deacons, but this does not make them Presbyterians. And they are non-instrument in their singing, but this does not make them Church of Christ. Ah, the hallmark we have carved out for ourselves!

The logic is persuasive. The only way to be non-denominational is not to be denominational, and that is simply refusing to wear anyone, distinctive name that sets you apart from other believers. At the Mid-Cities Chapel they are simply "a Christ-centered fellowship bringing people to Jesus." Who is closer to the Scriptures, after all, those who leave or we who stay?

These folk came out of Churches of Christ, if that is the way to put it. They are of course still a church of Christ or the Body of Christ, with an indisputable non-denominational position. When we wear the one name "Church of Christ," and paint it, type it, engrave it, emboss it, and utter it on everything we do and say, we *are* a denomination, all disclaimers to the contrary not withstanding. But our brethren in Arlington, who have in one way or another cut the umbilical cord, are not a denomination.

Many of these brothers and sisters at the chapel were once a part of the conservative, sometimes called “anti,” Churches of Christ, who are well aware of what it means to be sectarian. Like Thomas Campbell, they grew sick and tired of the jarrings and janglings of sectarian strife and turned their backs upon the whole sordid mess. Now they are free, and, as the) put it, “We believe that Christianity is a living relationship with a living person Jesus Christ.” They are back - or up - to where the Campbells started. But where are we with our party name and our sectarian standards of fellowship?

Limiting myself to what came across my desk in a single day (instances are numerous all over the country), there is another public witness coming from Christ’s Church in Roswell, New Mexico in the form of a brochure entitled “Greetings from Christ’s Church,” and these people were also “Church of Christ” (Should I use quotation marks?). Christ’s Church or Church of Christ? Grammatically there may be no difference, but *theo-logically* there is a vast difference, for it takes a group from a clearly defined denominational status (Everyone in Roswell knows what a “Church of Christ” is) to a non-denominational status.

An attending letter from one of the ministers, my friend and brother Stan Harbour, longtime reader of this journal and an Abilene graduate, is the one who provided the title for this essay. He says that they have peace and happiness now that they have cut the umbilical cord. Cutting away the one sure mark of Church of Christ identity, being *acap-pella*, many of the old-timers have left them and returned to a bona-fide Chruch of Christ. They have introduced both a piano and a flute. Not only will all the powers of Nashville be against them for such behavior but Plato as well, for the old philosopher, believing the flute to be vulgar, forbade its use in the education of youth in his ideal republic.

But Plato and the flute aside, this is one of the few groups that have left us that has adopted instrumental music. Stan writes that he grew tired of teaching false notions about music, and he believes the free Churches of Christ who seek to make the *acappella* posi-tion a true mark of our heritage are making a mistake. It is a Church of Christism, he insists, and not a part of the Stone-Campbell heritage. He says believers from many backgrounds now make up their membership, which began with 34 and has grown to 114. I visited this group sometime back and found them to be deeply spiritual and dedicated to being a ministering Body of Christ, apart from any sectarian impediments. Writes Stan: “I am convinced that unless ‘liberal’ groups cut ties with the ‘movement’ in order to unite with the Movement, they will only make themselves miserable fighting the institution.”

Some of the groups that have cut the umbilical cord have continued to calf themselves Church of Christ, even when they consider themselves liberated from Church of Christism. The Burke Road Church of Christ in Houston, whose bulletin arrived at our house today,

was one of our first congregations to become what I have been calling *open* and *free,* a pilgrimage that began almost two decades ago. They have been one of our most innovative churches, though they have always been *acappella*. They have a *woman* youth minister, the first among us insofar as I know. Their fine facility has long been open to numerous humanitarian activities, and they have mutual sharing sessions. They are always doing something different, the recent bulletin telling of a "telephone prayer chain" among the members is an example.

I just called my friend and sister in the Burke Road church, Gay Graham, to get a description of this prayer ministry. Inspired by Evelyn Christiansen's *What Happens When Women Pray (Women* was later dropped and changed to *We),* the sisters resolved to improve their church's prayer life by forming a chain of those who would pray for specific people and problems when requested to do so. When the chairman receives a request she first prays herself, then she calls the next one, and this continues until all the concerned ones have prayed. The last one calls the chairman to let her know the chain has been completed. This may happen at anytime of day. It has an ecumenical touch in that the sisters (a few men are in on it) may call other churches where prayer chains exist and request that they also pray. This they did for a lad that broke his neck, the request being that God would be glorified. The boy's healing turned his father toward renewal. Gale says they pray requests not answers, for they don't know just how the Father will answer their prayers, but they pray believing He *will* answer.

This is something gloriously new, a *praying* Church of Christ, for as a people we have given little place to the power and excitement of prayer. So if *that* 'is cutting the umbilical cord, I say let her rip!

But the most innovative church of all is the Church of Christ in Valdese, N.C., which has not only moved to a freer and more open position generally, but becomes the only church among us that I know of that has women leading in public worship. Richard Blackwell, the minister, writes: "We started allowing our Christian sisters to lead in public worship. For this practice and our refusal to condemn the other churches around us, the congregation has been repeatedly and unmercifully attacked."

It is to be pitied that our people have to persecute those who veer from tradition. They little realize that such a vindictive and oppressive spirit is far more a departure from the rule of Christ than women serving in the pulpit. We must mature to the point that we can allow churches to differ without castigating them. It is possible that one church may be justified in what it does, depending on where it is in its pilgrimage, while another church would not be. In any event we do not have to pass judgment. We are rather to cultivate that love that tends to be blind to the weaknesses of our sisters and brothers.

Whether we call all this, and much more that could be told, cutting the umbilical cord or simply a move in new directions, it is imperative that we recognize that these *avant garde* churches are not all that different. They are still our brothers and sisters, and Jesus Christ is the Lord of us all. We must further realize that we may have something to learn from them. After all, who are we to say just who is and who is not a Church of Christ. The Scriptures tell us that the firm foundation of God stands and that the Lord knows those that are his. I'll buy that. - *the Editor*

Peace is such a precious jewel that I would give anything for it but truth.

--*Matthew Henry*

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Pilgrimage of Joy … No. 51

1972: A YEAR FOR RENEWAL

W. Carl Ketcherside

On March 13-17, I was with the Northglenn Christian Church at Denver. It was served by my good friend, William Lower. I first met him and his lovely family at Fort Wayne, Indiana. He was an excellent administrator, an apt student and a competent proclaimer of the Word. I stayed in a little camper belonging to one of the brethren. It was pitched at the rear of the church building and it was in a real spot. At night I could see the star-studded canopy of the skies flung above me, un obscured by the smog of our own creation. It was a real place for meditating and I did a great deal of it. Out of my deliberations came an article which was one of my deepest. It was entitled "Spiritual Argonauts" and deals with the nature and essence of truth. It was published in the August issue of Mission Messenger, in 1972, and appears in the volume called "The Divine Purpose." I have never written another to equal it. And I could not have written it if I had not been alone at night on the plains outside "The Mile High City."

March 20-22 found me with the Northside Church of Christ at Grand Rapids, Michigan. I stayed with Patrick Miles and his good wife. They were a wonderful black brother and sister. They had two beautiful children. It must have been rather strange for them having a white man in their home. I caught them staring at me around the door facing as I wrote. Pat was an elder and a good one indeed. He had a grasp of what was transpiring and was a firm believer in the need for implementing the prayer of Jesus for unity.

While there I spoke at chapel at Great Lakes Bible College and also met with the Campus workers at Michigan State. The school was in the vanguard of the student revolution. They were taking to the streets and marching for any cause, or simply creating an artificial cause and marching anyhow. It was interesting to see them gather momentum and wave their fists and start shouting. It was a great time to be there with the message of "The Indestructible Jesus" when a lot of other things were being reduced to rubble or going up in licking flames. In times like these you need an anchor!

I went next to Newport, Oregon for the third time. I was becoming a regular fixture in this fishing town, so picturesquely sprawled above the wide Pacific. The brethren had established a coffee house mission on the waterfront. To it, came sailors from every country possessing a fishing fleet Here they could find a free copy of the scriptures, sometimes in their native tongue. There was always someone with whom to talk about the lordship of Jesus. A few steps down the wharf was Mo's chowder house, a famed place which looked like anything except a restaurant, but made clam chowder which was out of this world. If you ate too much of it you would be too!

We had decided that the lessons at night should be on the book of Romans. I worked out a series which I designated: Nonsense and Incense; Faith and Futility; The Father of the Faithful; Dead and Delivered; The "As" and "So" of Service. The auditorium was filled every night. The open forum attendance each morning was very gratifying. It was while in this town I found an old friend whom I had known from boyhood in Topeka, Kansas. He had become a judge on the circuit court judiciary.

It was my good fortune to go next to Hoxie, Kansas, where Darrel Foltz is doing such effective work. While there several members of the Dunkard Brethren attended every night. I learned that they had quite a colony at Quinlan, Kansas, where there were two congregations as the result of an unfortunate split. Realizing that they had descended from the work of Philip Jacob Spencer and Herman Francke, in protest against certain deficiences in Reformation life and practice, I was anxious to meet with some of them. We went out to the beautiful and fertile farm of one of the leaders. I soon found that they were descendants of the Pietists, and were part of a restoration movement which preceded ours by a century.

The house was plainly furnished. Everything served a utilitarian purpose. It was spotless. There was no television set. A great many of what we consider "modern conveniences" were conspicuous by their absence. The people attired themselves in simple garments which denoted their faith and separated them from the world about them. They practice foot-washing in conjunction with their communion. They hold a love feast annually as a symbol of their affection for one another. I was blessed by being able to talk

with them. It was only in recent years they had begun to attend our meetings. They could come and not offend their conscience since we did not have instrumental music. I was much impressed with the unaffectedness of their lives. It was no problem to me to recognize them as brothers and sisters.

It was about this time I learned of the death of two aged saints whose lives had impressed me greatly. One was Isaiah H. H. Moore, 91, of Louisville, Kentucky. He was killed when thrown from an automobile in a three car collision in New Lebanon, Indiana. This humble black man, a direct descendant of slaves, had long worked with College of the Scriptures at Louisville. The other was Charles Bussard, also 91, who was living near Springfield, Missouri, when summoned to his eternal home. He was of hardy pioneer stock, and had spent his entire life within a few miles of his birthplace. Generous, open and free-hearted he had roots going back to the pioneer days when the English and Scotch people crossed the Appalachians and drifted westward. He had a lot of Elizabethan words in his simple vocabulary.

I traveled next to Elgin, Oregon for a series of studies on “The Life of the Spirit.” I was met at Pendleton by a brother in a light plane. We lifted out of the valley and crossed over a high mountain which stood between us and our destination. We were so close to the ground that I could look down and see bands of wild elk grazing. It was a hunter’s paradise. My stay was marred by word of a highway accident which claimed the life of Bernell Weems, of Bonne Terre, Missouri. A preacher of the Word, he died early one morning when his car struck the abutment of a bridge. I was asked to come for the funeral service but could not, as I was scheduled to be the speaker at the commencement at which our oldest granddaughter, Dawn, graduated from the high school at Aspen, Colorado. She was valedictorian of her class and made a fine speech based upon I Corinthians 13.

Following an excellent meeting at James River Chapel, south of Springfield, I was booked next for the camp near Macrorie, Saskatchewan. Word came of the death of J. C. Bunn, at the age of 90, in Washington. In my early boyhood when I was twelve years old, he had announced my first preaching appointment at the little rural church at Old Pearl, in Illinois. My work had “caught on fire” from that fateful night and my destiny was determined. At Macrorie I was associated with Ed Benoit, a member of the provincial parliament for Alberta, sitting at Edmonton. A great student of the Word and a master of communication he did a tremendous job. We had a great time and saw much good accomplished.

I accepted an invitation to address the College-Career session at the North American Christian Convention. My theme was “The Holy Spirit in the Church Now.” After finishing my assignment I was preparing to leave for home a day early. I was asked to

deliver the final morning address as a substitute for Joe Barnett, of Lubbock, Texas, who called to say he was sick and could not make it. There were over 5,000 present and I had to speak primarily “off the cuff.” A great many persons whose hearing was apparently defective told me it was the best I had ever done. I still run into people who were present and remind me of the speech. It is enough to discourage one from preparation.

August 11 and 12 I was accompanied by Otto Schlieper and Leroy Long, of Saint Louis, to a men’s clinic at Rock Garden Camp in the beautiful Missouri Ozarks. I was associated there with Knofel Staton, currently a professor at Ozark Bible College. Since that time I have been with him in various other meetings here and in Canada. Each time I hear him I become more convinced he is one of the most articulate men among us. His research is so thorough that it leaves nothing to be desired. He is the author of a number of books, all of them good ones. His studies on marriage leave little else to be said. Fortunate indeed are those places which secure him as a speaker.

During September I was at a Family Camp at Little Galilee, near Clinton, Illinois, where Enos Dowling also spoke. The former librarian at Butler School of Religion, he had become associated with Lincoln Christian Seminary. His knowledge of the restoration movement history is unsurpassed. His hobby is collecting old song books prepared by composers in the movement. Among those he has gathered are scores of books starting with Alexander Campbell, and reaching down from the inimitable J. D. Fillmore, to brethren who are still alive and writing. A great change has come over the music used since the beginning. The great transformation that has taken place the past several years betokens the coming of a new reformation. Every such reformation in the past has been launched upon the wings of song.

On September 8, 9 I was at Butler Springs Men’s Retreat in Ohio. It was a blessing for me to be associated with James Smith and Paul Bajko. Paul is from Poland. As I write this he has just celebrated his 25th year in preaching the good news to the Polish people. In 1971 the church in Poland celebrated its 50th anniversary. Paul helped to plant a congregation in Bielsk-Podlaski in 1969. They remodeled an old building to seat about 70 persons. They have since outgrown their quarters and have applied to the government for permission to build a larger one. Since 1969, new congregations have been planted in Poland at the rate of one per year.

I went next to Hilltop Christian Service Camp and spoke at a Men’s Retreat. The camp is near Columbus, Indiana, and from it I went directly to Sunbury, Ohio. Then on to Hobbs, New Mexico, where I was surprised to see Brother and Sister W. P. Hutson. They had come to take a motel room next to mine just so we could talk in spare moments. Brother Hutson grew up in a different segment of our brotherhood than had I, but he read

Mission Messenger and became entranced by what I was doing. We had great times talking over our past and thinking about the future. The three of us became convinced that we were living in one of the thrilling periods of the church.

From Hobbs, I journeyed to Corvallis and Beaverton, Oregon. It was my third trip to Oregon during the year. At Corvallis I had the privilege of association with a great number of college faculty and students who were dedicated to Christ Jesus. Our association was unmarred by any kind of difference or friction. Although they came from various backgrounds, under the gentle influence of the Spirit they were drawn together. At Beaverton I was compelled to deal at length with the rise of the charismatic movement. It was beginning to make an impact upon the community. It was a great time to be alive and actively dealing with the problems of the church.

I closed the year at the little Illinois town of Astoria. We had a great series of meetings and I met some fine people. I returned home to prepare my speech on "Fellowship" for the preacher's workshop at Abilene Christian College. It was to be held January 8-10. As I looked back upon the year just spent I could rejoice in accomplishments for the Cause. I had traveled in every part of our nation, and had gone to Canada as well. Everywhere I found brethren awakening to our needs as a people. It was evident that we were moving into a brighter and better day.

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"BEGATS" AND RELEVANCY

Robert Meyers

It may be useful to share a conviction in this place about what is, and what is not, "Biblical preaching." It is felt in some churches that a sermon is Biblical only if the topic is traditionally religious (i.e., how should baptism be performed? how often should one take communion?), or if Scripture is quoted often with chapter and verse citations, or if the name of Christ is invoked frequently in the tones of special reverence reserved for the pulpit.

The truth is that all these things may be present in a sermon that is quite out of harmony with true religion. The ability to name the twelve apostles or the sons of Jacob or the titles of Old Testament books (in order), and the ability to quote hundreds of verses, may be about as useful in Christian life as memorizing every street sign in Dallas is useful for good citizenship. Yet human nature being what it is, the man who can rattle off 2,000 street names will amaze some people with what they consider erudition.

I had a professor once by the name of N. B. Hardeman who told us in preaching class that if we went into a new church there was a sure-fire way to impress audiences during the first few Sundays. “Name all the kings of Israel,” he said, “or memorize the genealogy of Christ and give them ‘Judas begat Phares, and Phares begat Esrom, and Esrom begat Aram’ until they are dizzy. It won’t be worth a plugged nickel, but from then on everybody will think you know everything there is to know about the Bible.”

He knew, despite his surface cynicism, that real Biblical preaching can be identified. It does what Christ did when he spoke of the Old Testament like this: “It has been said … but I say…”. That is, Biblical preaching takes old truth and puts a new dress on it, so that people will hear it seriously. Jesus said that instead of *destroying* the law by such language, he was actually *fulfilling* it by showing how its enduring truth could be appropriated by the men of his own time.

He might have destroyed it, however, by going on to say the same things in the same old ways, if life had not moved on, as if language had not changed, as if men knew nothing they had not known millenniums ago. But he knew better than that. The word of God, for Him, was a spring of “living” water, welling up ceaselessly from the deep places of devotion. It was not a stale drink hauled up in buckets from a reservoir where everything had been the same for four thousand years.

As for “Biblical preaching,” it is difficult for anyone who accepts Christ as Lord of life to preach a sermon which is *not* Biblical, since the Bible finally engages almost every issue known to mankind. Those who wrote the Bible had no thought of being “Biblical.” They were simply responding with passion and honesty, in the love of God, to human situations.

Some of them wrote lovely little sermons to make their friends less prejudiced *(Ruth, Jonah).* Some made histories, to give their friends a sense of God’s care for nations *(Kings, Chronicles).* Some wrote lyrics that ranged from exuberant joy to bitter anguish, from tenderness to extraordinary cruelty *(Psalms).* Some collected lessons taught in school on subjects like bad table manners, cheating in business, when to spank children and how to pick friends *(Proverbs).*

So one could hardly fail to be Biblical in his preaching, no matter what human concern he touched upon, so long as he related those concerns to the enduring principles set forth in the Bible, and so long as he involved himself, as Christ did, with how those principles can be translated into modern speech and made useful to modern man.

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BOOK NOTES

Are you aware that there is a church with 150,000 members, the world's largest, in Seoul, Korea? The pastor, Paul Yonggi Cho, shares his ideas on the language of faith, happiness, prosperity, improving one's self-image, building relationships, and experiencing God in a new book, *Solving Life's Problems.* At one point he deals with how an inadequate emotional life causes diseases, even cancer. 5.50 postpaid.

Everyone needs a good concordance if she takes Bible study seriously. We can supply *Cruden's Concordance,* which provides handy reference to all the important words, at 7.50.

The Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah by Edersheim is one of the great books on the Bible, packed with vital information. The author, after lecturing at Oxford, moved to a small country church where he spent seven years writing this book. Two volumes in one. 18.95 postpaid.

A special purchase enables us to offer *Nave's Topical Bible* for only 6.95 postpaid. It is an ideal study Bible in that all the subjects are listed topically, that is, all that is said about forgiveness is listed together, and- so with all subjects.

We still offer *The Fool of God,* the story of Alexander Campbell's life for 5.50. Again we mention Harry Boer's *The Book of Revelation,* which is not a verse by verse study but it explains the symbolism of each chapter for the general reader. 4.50. A lot of our readers bought *The Mormon Papers,* which examines the Mormon scriptures as if with a scalpel. 3.50. Again we recommend for the young as well as the old *You Don't Have to Be Old When You Grow Old,* which has a chapter of "Good Company for Myself." 3.50. Again we highly recommend James Dobson's *Straight Talk to Men and Their Wives,* for you will laugh and weep your way to better relationships. 7.95. Prices include postage.

Robert Palmer's *What the Bible Says About Faith and Opinion* goes far in answering the nagging question of what is faith and what opinion, with extensive reference both to Scripture and to our pioneers, as well as others. Its treatment of opinion and fellowship is especially helpful. 13.50 postpaid.

Dialogue: The Key to Understanding Other Religions tells how Christians should approach other religions. 5.50 pp. One of William Barclay's last books, which he was still working on when he died, deals with selected psalms, entitled *The Lord Is My Shepherd.* 5.50 pp. *Johnson's Notes on the New Testament,* two volumes in one, long a best seller among Churches of Christ is 11.50 postpaid.

Our 1979-80 bound volume will be ready later this year. Those who have ordered the 1979 volume will receive a copy with invoice enclosed. You should reserve a copy if you have not. We now have but six copies left of *The Restoration Mind,* our bound volume for 1971-72, at 4.95, and only 20 copies of *The Word Abused* (1975-76), at 5.95. You should order at once if you desire these volumes. We also have *Principles of Unity and Fellowship* (1977) and *The Ancient Order* (1978) at 5.50 each.

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OUR CHANGING WORLD

It appears that we have inadvertently become involved in a small dispute, stemming from our commendatory remarks about Tom Warren in his recent debate in Denton. I have received a reprint of what Dr. Warren said about Prof. James D. Bales of Harding College in his book, *Keeping The Lock In Wedlock,* charging him with holding views like those of Ketcherside and Garrett, especially in reference to distinguishing between gospel and doctrine which he suggests is what led us astray. Dr. Warren was not surprised, therefore, when Prof. Bales was commended by *Restoration Review,* and he states unequivocally that he would be alarmed if he should ever be commended by this journal. And we did just that. Well, you can't win them all. As for our views on gospel and doctrine leading us astray, we suppose Dr. Warren would also say that "this error," as he describes it, is also what corrupted both Thomas and Alexander Campbell, Isaac Errett, and J. W. McGarvey, to name only a few, who also made this distinction. The Campbells went so far as to say that the *failure* to make such a distinction was the cause of many errors.

David Reagan sent us a Xerox copy of a certificate issued to Raccoon John Smith, the famous pioneer preacher, by the American Christian Missionary Society in 1861. It is signed by A. Campbell, President. It certifies that Smith was a "Director for Life of the American Christian Missionary Society" by virtue of a $100.00 donation made in his behalf by Alexander Campbell. While we appreciate having this historical document, we are fully aware that it would serve as an indictment against these two leading pioneers by the powers that be in the Church of Christ today, which has an "anti-Society" condition for fellowship. Raccoon John Smith a director of the missionary society! His membership fee paid by Alexander Campbell, who also signed the document as president! To whom shall we turn? Even the exemplary J. W. McGarvey, while anti-organ, was also for the Society. If these men lived today, they could not belong to "the true church." But we hope this

notice will not cause these good brethren to be disfellowshipped posthumously. If this happens, we'll accept them into our congregation here in Denton. Since we have some dis-spirited bodies we should be able to abide some disembodied spirits!

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READERS' EXCHANGE

I attend some of the Church of Christ preachers' meetings. Some of them are really open and free. It's a struggle for them, though, with the more traditional brethren. -- *Jack Albee, Chicago, Il.*

The article on "Is Baptism Essential?" spoke to an issue that has long vexed our Movement. I am afraid we have done with baptism what the Baptists have done with faith alone, or the Pentecostals with the Holy Spirit. It seems that every sect has a particular emphasis which has divided Christendom. -- *A. William Johnson, First Christian Church, Tulare, Ca. 83274*

Did I mention to you a limerick about a minister teaching his cat Greek?

There was a kind curate of Kew
Who kept a large cat in the pew
Which he taught every week
Alphabetical Greek,

But got no farther than *mu.* -- *Bruce Metzer, Princeton Seminary, Princeton, N.J.*

Thank you for mentioning "the fellowship of the concerned ones," knowing we can and will be used by the Lord to change things for the better. God bless you in your articles on "With All the Mind," and in the joy we receive in loving Him with all our minds and hearts. -- *Helen Berg, 2401 Green Ave., Port Arthur, Tx. 77640*

I come from a long line of restorationists. My great-great grandfather was a preacher. I feel at home among each shade of our brotherhood. We are presently in a province where there are two independent churches, several non-instrument churches, and one Disciples church. I have only been able to relate to the independents. I find this foreign to the fruit of the Spirit. God help us! -- *Merrill Nicholson, Church of Christ, Portage La Prane, Manitoba, Canada*

Will you help us help others by sending this journal to them complimentary for one year? Some of our most avid readers were contacted this way, and some have been greatly encouraged. Send us as many names as you please, with a minimum of five, at only $2.00 per name. We do not reveal the donor's name, for we keep no record once the sub is processed. In all these years *very few* have refused the paper, while many have expressed deep gratitude, some wanting to thank the donor. We tell even these that we can provide no information as to who sent them the paper. So you can do a good deed in secret and the Lord will reward you openly - but not through us! How about helping us double our readership in 1981?

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